

What is claimed is:

1        1. A computer system for gathering and processing usage data in a usage-based resource  
2 licensing system comprising:  
3            one or more client computers, each having installed thereon one or more resources, the  
4 usage of which is based upon one or more usage-based licenses;  
5            one or more agent programs either installed on said client computers or other computers  
6 coupled to said client computers via any data path for gathering usage data and detecting and  
7 controlling launches of resources license monitoring;  
8            at least one license monitoring server coupled to said client computers by any data path and  
9 programmed to receive and store usage data from said agent programs, and launch authorization  
10 request messages from said agent programs, and programmed to consult data indicating which  
11 resources are authorized for use and which are not, and respond to said launch authorization request  
12 messages with authorization or denial messages, and programmed to receive and store data  
13 indicating which resources are authorized for use and which are not, and programmed to receive and  
14 store instruction data indicating what types of usage data to gather for each different licensed  
15 resource, and to send messages to said agent programs indicating what types of usage data to  
16 gather about each licensed resource, and programmed to upload said usage data from time to time;  
17            a usage measuring server coupled to said license monitoring server by any data path, and  
18 programmed to send messages to said license monitoring server indicating at least which resources  
19 are licensed for use and indicating which types of usage data to gather for each licensed resource,  
20 and programmed to receive said usage data transmitted by said license monitoring server, and store  
21 the usage data for use of each resource on each client computer in an appropriate usage data buffer.

1        2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said usage measuring server is further programmed to  
2 use a data structure defining which resources are licensed to which users and on what terms, said  
3 terms being stored in data entries in said data structure called provisioning items, said data structure  
4 also storing said usage data which measure use and which said usage measuring server is  
5 programmed to use to generate metrics for use in collecting licensing revenues.

1        3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure contains data which allows any  
2 distribution system to be modeled and to allow the same resource to be licensed to different users on  
3 different terms.

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1        4. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure contains distillation programs which  
2 contain formulas which are programmable and which can be programmed such that charges to  
3 different customers for use of the same type of resource can be made on a different basis by using a  
4 different formula for each customer.

1        5. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure contains data which allows multiple  
2 resources from different vendors to be licensed as a package.

1        6. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure contains data that defines all  
2 available licensing terms for each resource, and wherein said usage measuring server is  
3 programmed to allow all prospective licensees to log in and view all available licensing terms from all  
4 vendors for all resources available.

1        7. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure contains data identifying entities in a  
2 distribution system and the relationships between them, if any, and data representing the resources  
3 available for licensing and the licensing terms made available by the entities that provide said  
4 resources available for licensing and data uploaded from said license monitoring server that indicates  
5 the amount of usage of licensed resources on said client computers, and data defining the entities in  
6 said distribution system which made use of the licensed resources.

1        8. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure includes distillation spreadsheet  
2 programs programmed with formulas to convert usage data with metric data.

1        9. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure includes CSU distillation  
2 spreadsheet programs programmed with formulas to convert said metrics to central service units  
3 defined by a licensee or a distribution of a resource.

1        10. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure includes data which defines entities  
2 in a distribution system and resources available for licensing and the terms thereof and which entities  
3 have access to which resources and upon which licensing terms.

1        11. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure includes data which defines an  
2 authorization node for each license each user has under the terms of a provisioning item.

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1        12. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said data structure includes data which defines one or  
2 more authorization nodes for each license a user has under the terms of a provisioning item, each  
3 said authorization node storing information needed to manage collecting usage data by said  
4 computer system.